

# Indiana House of Representatives

## News and Information

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### **BISCHOFF: AREA RIVERBOAT MONEY SAFE FOR THIS SESSION**

INDIANAPOLIS – Thanks to the efforts of State Rep. Bob Bischoff (D-Lawrenceburg) and other legislators, plans to take almost \$40 million in riverboat money away from Dearborn, Ohio and Switzerland Counties have been turned away for the 2005 session of the Indiana General Assembly.

"Now that the session has come to a close, I am pleased to report that we have been able to defeat plans that were designed to take away the riverboat funds that have been dedicated for the past several years to counties in the 68<sup>th</sup> House District and other locations," Bischoff said.

"We have been able to demonstrate that the loss of these funds would be devastating to local residents, because it would take away the ability to complete a number of important projects that are crucial to the future growth of our area," he continued.

In recent weeks, two efforts were made by Republican lawmakers to take away the riverboat funding from those counties that were promised a share of the total revenue when the boats first came to Indiana in the mid-Nineties. One proposal was intended to use riverboat funds to help balance a state budget plan that would have forced large property tax increases on local residents.

"Either plan would have created severe problems in our area, because counties would have lost millions of dollars in support," Bischoff said. "Fortunately, those of us who represent riverboat counties were able to convincingly demonstrate that these proposals would deprive our areas of funding that is desperately needed. In this fight, the assistance of many officials at the local level was critical."

Since area counties began receiving regular allocations, Bischoff said the area has used that riverboat money to finance a number of worthy initiatives.

"Through this money, we have been able to complete road and bridge projects that ordinarily would have been set aside because the financial resources simply were not available," he said. "It also has helped provide additional funding for local schools, which will be crucial in the near future because the new budget cuts state support for education, which could force property tax increases at the local level.

"With the session wrapped up, we can rest easy that the Republicans have not succeeded in their plan to balance the state budget on the backs of local residents," Bischoff concluded. "Enough lawmakers on both sides of the aisle were able to work together to make sure this plan would not succeed, and area residents are the big winners, as a result."

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